

Feature Fish: Sucker

continued from front

of their head, its easy for a sucker to find its food on the bottom. They can cruise along, and when their sensitive lips detect food, it takes just a little effort to lift it into their mouth.

Suckers are considered to be broadcast spawners. That's just a fancy way of saying that they lay their eggs over a fairly large area. Since their eggs may be widely scattered, the parents do not guard the eggs or the young fish after they hatch. That's good if you're a predatory fish, since young suckers are a very important forage, or food item, for many other fish.

Though they may not be the prettiest fish in the state, there is still a lot to like about suckers. And if you're a distance runner, walker, or hiker, you'll especially appreciate hearing about

one particular species of sucker in Montana--the Blue Sucker.

Biologists caught some blue suckers, then performed a fast version of fish surgery on them, implanting a small radio transmitter inside their belly. This transmitter didn't pick up the latest music and news; instead, it sent information about the movement of the fish back to the biologists. When they started looking at how much some of the suckers had moved, they were astounded. Some of the fish had moved hundreds of miles up and down the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers in a single year. Few other animals or fish in the state are known to move that much.

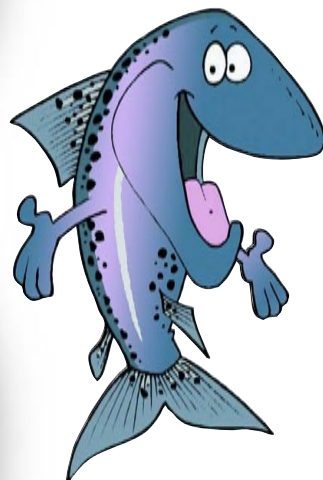
Although they were certain that the fish had actually moved that many miles, the biologists still aren't totally sure what inspired the fish to move so much. Since the sucker family is so large, maybe the fish were moving around visiting all their cousins. Of course, maybe that part of this tale is nothing more than a fish story!

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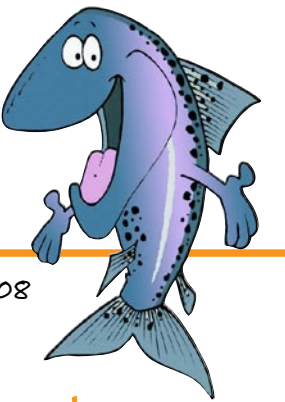
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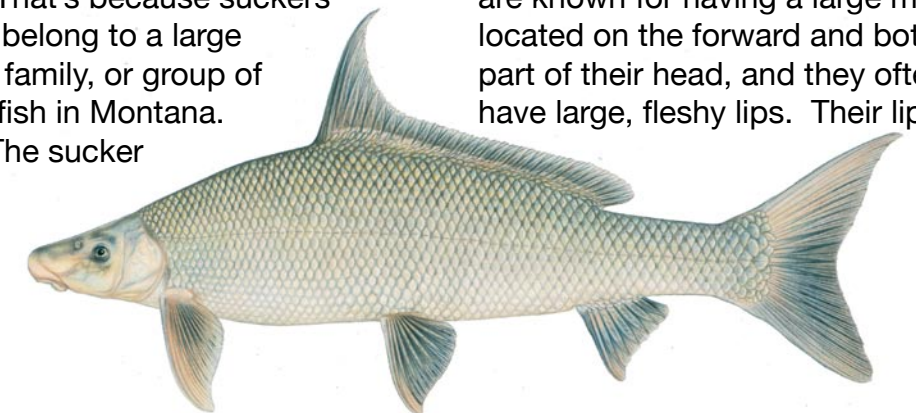
May Club Feature Fish - Sucker

How many cousins do you have? Some of us have a lot of them, while some of us have just a few. Others may have no cousins at all. For our feature fish – the sucker, the list of cousins is a big one.

That's because suckers belong to a large family, or group of fish in Montana. The sucker

river carpsucker, mountain sucker, smallmouth buffalo, and largemouth buffalo.

There are a couple characteristics common to all suckers. Probably the easiest to remember is the mouth shape and location. Suckers are known for having a large mouth, located on the forward and bottom part of their head, and they often have large, fleshy lips. Their lips



The blue sucker is found in the Missouri and Yellowstone drainages in Montana

family has 9 members, all of them native to the state—that's a lot of fish, and larger than all other families of fish in the state except the minnow and trout family.

Members of the sucker family have some cool and very descriptive names like shorthead redhorse, longnose, and largescale sucker; some colorful names like white and blue sucker; and some just plain odd names like

aren't for kissing though, they are specially adapted to help the sucker locate and grab its food. Since suckers will eat a variety of food items, including insects, fish eggs, and crustaceans to name just a few things, their lips must be able to accommodate a variety of shapes and sizes of food.

The location of their mouth is an important adaptation as well. Since its located on or near the bottom

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Look Here!

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**Montana Fish,
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Hooked ON FISHING



Just For Kids:

Nightcrawlers are perhaps the best of baits

By **MARK HENCKEL Billings**
Gazette Outdoor Editor

Nightcrawlers and worms are really great fishing bait. Think about it. There may be no other bait that's so universal in its ability to catch fish. Catch trout? You bet. Bass, walleyes, bluegills, perch, crappies, catfish, burbot, kokanee salmon - crawlers catch them all and many more fish species.

A friend of mine once told me that his yard wasn't just a patch of well-watered grass. It was his Fishing Insurance Policy. As long as he took care of the yard, it provided enough nightcrawlers to ensure his fishing success year after year.

Catching nightcrawlers for a day of fishing can be a lot of fun for a kid. Just water the lawn real well. Then stay up until it gets pitch dark outside. Then take a flashlight and something to carry the nightcrawlers in that you catch.

The nightcrawlers will glisten with wetness when light hits them at night. Try not to put the whole

beam of the light on them - just the edge of the beam - or they'll slither back into their holes. When you grab a nightcrawler, don't pull too hard or you'll break them. Just patiently put a little pressure on them and they'll release their grip on their holes and slide out.

You can keep your nightcrawlers in special worm bedding available at sporting goods or bait stores. Or you can put them in damp dirt.

Because summer days are hot, make sure you keep your bait container in the shade and keep it damp and cool as possible. If not, the crawlers will get soft and could die in the heat. And then, the bad smells of dead, rotten nightcrawlers start.

Nightcrawlers are great fishing bait - whether you buy them at a bait store or catch them yourself. Either way, the fish love to eat them.

POOR MAN'S LOBSTER

Pike Fillets (No Bones)
Lightly salted boiling water
Butter



Cut pike fillets into 1 inch cubes. Boil in lightly salted water for approximately 5 minutes or until fillets are no longer shiny. Remove cubed fish from water and place on broiling pan, basting each piece with butter (margarine will not do). Broil for 5 minutes or until some fish pieces turn light brown and butter is bubbling on other pieces. Dip the cubed fish in drawn butter.

M.A.Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH

Just for kids:

Learning to fly fish is best started at home

By **MARK HENCKEL Billings**
Gazette Outdoors Editor

If you want to get started in fly fishing, my advice would be to start at home. I say that because I learned the hard way. I learned the wrong way. I tried to do it on a trout stream.

The first hurdle that all fly fishermen face is learning how to cast. That takes some practice and, typically, some guidance from someone who already knows how to cast.

So find an experience fly fisherman to help you and pick out a big grassy area, whether that's in your backyard, front yard or in a nearby park, and set about learning how to pick up the line, cast it back and forth, and let the line out to help you drop a fly exactly where you want it to be.

The problem with doing that on the stream is that you have far too many distractions. There is flowing water. There are rocks and other obstacles out in front of you. There are branches and tall grass

behind you. And there are fish you hope to catch. All of these things take away from your ability to concentrate on your casting.

If you do it at home, you can eliminate all those things. You can learn how to cast for some distance. You can put a hoop or other object out in front of you and practice dropping a fly exactly where you want it to be.

Once you learn those skills, then you can go to the stream. One of the things about fly fishing that makes it so much fun is that you still have many lessons to learn. In fact, it seems that you can learn new things at every stage through an entire fishing lifetime.

But the first thing you have to learn is how to cast and become good at it. And that's done best at home.

TROUT ALMONDINE

Fish fillets, any kind of fish will do
Heat frying pan, then add cold oil
Toasted almonds
Butter
Chicken broth
Lemon juice
Fresh parsley



Roll fillets in flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Put in pan, flesh side down, fry for 3 minutes. Turn over, fry 3 more minutes. Transfer into baking dish. Bake in oven preheated to 350 for 3 minutes. While fish is baking make sauce.

Sauce

Roll butter in flour. Heat drippings from fried fish, add butter and melt. Add 3-4 oz. of chicken broth and thicken drippings. Add juice of a lemon. Toast almonds while sauce thickens. Add almonds to sauce and pour sauce and almonds over fish. Add fresh parsley.
Delicious!